AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-43. (Canceled)

44. (New) A control server which controls an output of a first apparatus and an output of a second apparatus which is different from the first apparatus, the control server comprising:

a communication section for receiving, from the first apparatus when an output of the first apparatus changes, a first notification signal which indicates an output state of the first apparatus, and for receiving, from the second apparatus when an output of the second apparatus changes, a second notification signal which indicates an output state of the second apparatus;

a control rule storage section for storing a first control rule which describes a numerical value that indicates a first predetermined distance which is a basis to determine whether or not the output state of the second apparatus is to be changed in response to the first notification signal, and for storing a second control rule which describes a numerical value that indicates a second predetermined distance which is a basis to determine whether or not the output state of the first apparatus is to be changed in response to the second notification signal;

a determination section for acquiring, when the first notification signal is received, an inter-apparatus distance from the first apparatus to the second apparatus and determining whether the inter-apparatus distance is equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance indicated by the numerical value described in the first control rule or is larger than the first predetermined distance, and for acquiring, when the second notification signal is

received, an inter-apparatus distance from the second apparatus to the first apparatus and determining whether the inter-apparatus distance is equal to or smaller than the second predetermined distance indicated by the numerical value described in the second control rule or is larger than the second predetermined distance; and

an apparatus operation section for not changing the output state of the second apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance from the first apparatus to the second apparatus is determined to be larger than the first predetermined distance and changing the output state of the second apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, and for not changing the output state of the first apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance from the second apparatus to the first apparatus is determined to be larger than the second predetermined distance and changing the output state of the first apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the second predetermined distance.

45. (New) The control server according to claim 44, wherein

the first control rule stored in the control rule storage section further has described therein a content of an output state which is to be adopted when the output state of the second apparatus is changed in accordance with the output state of the first apparatus indicated by the first notification signal,

the second control rule stored in the control rule storage section further has described therein a content of an output state which is to be adopted when the output state of the first apparatus is changed in accordance with the output state of the second apparatus indicated by the second notification signal, and

the apparatus operation section changes, when the inter-apparatus distance from the first apparatus to the second apparatus is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, the output state of the second apparatus to the content of the to-be-adopted output state described in the first control rule, and changes, when the inter-apparatus distance from the second apparatus to the first apparatus is determined to be equal to or smaller than the second predetermined distance, the output state of the first apparatus to the content of the to-be-adopted output state described in the second control rule.

46. (New) The control server according to claim 45, wherein

the first notification signal includes information indicating change in a sound level of the first apparatus or information indicating change in ON/OFF state of power of the first apparatus, and

the apparatus operation section conducts, when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, either lowering of a sound level of the second apparatus or turning OFF of power of the second apparatus, if the first notification signal received from the communication section indicates an increase in the sound level of the first apparatus or if the first notification signal indicates turning ON of power of the first apparatus.

47. (New) The control server according to claim 45, wherein

the first notification signal includes information indicating change in a sound level of the first apparatus or information indicating change in ON/OFF state of power of the first apparatus, and

the apparatus operation section conducts, when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, either raising of a sound level of the second apparatus or turning ON of power of the second apparatus, if the first notification signal received from the communication section indicates a decrease in the sound level of the first apparatus or if the first notification signal indicates turning OFF of power of the first apparatus.

48. (New) The control server according to claim 45, wherein

the first apparatus is an apparatus that generates noise during operation, and the second apparatus is an apparatus that outputs audio,

the first notification signal includes information indicating change in a sound level of the noise generated from the first apparatus, or information indicating change in ON/OFF state of power of the first apparatus, and

the apparatus operation section raises, when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, the sound level of the second apparatus, if the first notification signal received from the communication section indicates an increase in noise of the first apparatus or if the first notification signal indicates turning ON of the power of the first apparatus.

49. (New) An apparatus operation method used in a control server which controls an output of a first apparatus and an output of a second apparatus which is different from the first apparatus,

the control server having stored therein in advance, a first control rule which is

transmitted from the first apparatus when an output of the first apparatus changes and which describes a numerical value that indicates a first predetermined distance which is a basis to determine whether or not an output state of the second apparatus is to be changed in response to a first notification signal indicating an output state of the first apparatus, and a second control rule which is transmitted from the second apparatus when an output of the second apparatus changes and which describes a numerical value that indicates a second predetermined distance which is a basis to determine whether or not an output state of the first apparatus is to be changed in response to a second notification signal indicating an output state of the second apparatus,

the method comprising:

a communication step of receiving the first notification signal from the first apparatus, and receiving the second notification signal from the second apparatus;

a determination step of acquiring, when the first notification signal is received, an inter-apparatus distance from the first apparatus to the second apparatus and determining whether the inter-apparatus distance is equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance indicated by the numerical value described in the first control rule or is larger than the first predetermined distance, and of acquiring, when the second notification signal is received, an inter-apparatus distance from the second apparatus to the first apparatus and determining whether the inter-apparatus distance is equal to or smaller than the second predetermined distance indicated by the numerical value described in the second control rule or is larger than the second predetermined distance; and

an apparatus operation step of not changing the output state of the second apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance from the first apparatus to the second apparatus is

determined to be larger than the first predetermined distance and changing the output state of the second apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the first predetermined distance, and of not changing the output state of the first apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance from the second apparatus to the first apparatus is determined to be larger than the second predetermined distance and changing the output state of the first apparatus when the inter-apparatus distance is determined to be equal to or smaller than the second predetermined distance.